(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the announcement by Pakistan on or around September 26, 1993 that Pakistan had halted their nuclear production programme.

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) how far the statement stands to verification if any made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Government have seen Press reports quoting the then Pak Caretaker Prime Minister Mr. Moeen Qurashi as stating that Pakistan had stopped and tapped its nuclear programme.

Subsequently, however, Pakistan Government had clarified that Pakistan's policy on the nuclear issue remains unchanged and that Pakistan will not give up its nuclear capability unilaterally.

(b) and (c) Our concern over the pursuit of a clandestine and weapons-oriented nuclear programme of Pakistan and its implications for India's and regional security and stability have been conveyed to all concerned.

Government constantly monitor all development having a bearing on India's security and take all necessary measures to safeguard it.

PM's Iran Visit

653. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the recent visit of Prime Minister to Iran he was successful in bringing Irainian Leadership round to India's stand on Kashmir issue;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) whether any other moves were made during the visit to put India on the centrestage in Central Asia; if so, what are the details thereof indicating the success achieved in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) PM briefed the Iranian leadership on india's position on Kashmir, and apprised it of Pak support to terrorism and subverion in J & K. The Iranian leadership expressed categorical support to India's territorial integrity and affirmed that Kashmir was an internal affair of India's territorial integrity and affirmed situation in J & K would be resolved speedly.

An MOU of Imperation in Surface Transport and Tranisit facilities was concluded during PM's visit. The MOU envisages copperation between India and Iran in the development of the transport and transit infrastructure so as to promote their trade and economic relations with the Central Asian States.

Engaging US Private Firms for Lobbying India's interests in United States

654. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD:
SHRI SURESH KALMADI:
SHRI P UPENDRA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been mooted to engage US Public Relations consultants for lobbying India's interests in the United States:

(b) if so, what is the amount being proposed to be spent as remuneration to the selected Public Relations Firms; and

(c) whether such professsonal competence as required to deal with trade technical and commercial issues with the US, is not available within India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) Government have decided in principle to engage a lobbying frim in the US. Some such firms are under consideration. On completion of the process of revaluation, the amount of remuneration to the selected firm would be determined. The

practice of lobbying to unique to the American system in which US firms offer specialised expertise. Government are not aware of firms in India operating in the US as registered lobbyists.

Killing of Indian fisherman by Sri Lankan Navy

655. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of Indian fisherman have recently been killed by the Sri Lankan Navy in the Palk Straits;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what steps Government have taken or propose to take it stop such killings of Indian fisherman on the Sri Lankan Navy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) Between September 1 and October 8, 1993, a total of seven incidents of attacks on Indian fisherman in the Palk Straits, leading to loss of life, injuries and damage to property, were reported to the Government. Each of these incidents was taken up by the Government with the Government of Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka denied Sri Lankan Navy's involvement in all these incidents except the one which took place on the night of September 1/2 and in which two Indian fisherman died. According to Sri Lanka Government, the firing by Sri Lanka Navy at an Indian fisherman boat on September 1/2 was a case of mistaken identity.

At the Foreign Secretary level discussions held between the two countries in Delhi on 15th October, 1993, the Indian side conveyed its concern and unhappiness over the recent incidents. Both sides agreed on the need for effective measures to prevent such incidents in future.

Lankan attacks on Indian fisherman

656. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the incidents of shooting on Indian fisherman in the months of September and October, 1993;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have lodged protest and demanded compensation for the families of victims from Sri Lankan Government; and

(d) what steps are being taken to restore the traditional rights of Indian fisherman to fish and navigate in the historical Waters between India and Sri Lanka as guaranteed under Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1947?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) Between September 1 and October 8, 1993, the Government's attention has been drawn to a total of seven incidents of attacks on Indian fishermen in the Palk Straits, leading to loss of life, injuries and damage to property. Each of these incidents was taken up by the Government with the Government of Sri Lanka. The Government conveyed its deep concern and unhappiness at these incidents to the Government of Sri Lanka, and also filed with the later, the claims for compensation for these incidents. Our concerns were also conveyed at Foreign Secretary level discussions between the two Governments held in Delhi on 15th October. The Government of Sri Lanka denied Sri Lankan Navy a involvement in all these incidents except the one which took place on the night of September 1/2 and in which two Indian fiherman died. Apcording to Sri Lanka Government, the firing by Sri Lankan Navy at an Indian fishing boat on September 1/2, was a case of mistaken identity.

(c) The matter of restoration of the traditional rights of Indian fisherman in the Palk Straits area, as guaranteed under the Maritime Boundary Agreements